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UNI Graduate Council Minutes #1047

UNI Graduate Council Minutes from September 24, 2015

Present: Amin, Beall, Calderon, Clayton, Cutter, Deemer, Dhanwada, Fontana, Juby, Kucuksari, Pohl, Power, Rod-Welch

Absent: Hanson, Schwieger, Teske

Guest: Wohlpert

Clayton called the meeting to order at 3:30. Pohl moved (second by Beall) to approve the minutes from September 10th. Motion passed.

Graduate College Reports:

Dhanwada reported that two meetings with grad coordinators were held last week. The results from last year's survey were discussed, along with planning a survey to get more information from graduate students.

Cutter reported that PDA applications are due October 1st. Submissions for the student awards - outstanding master's theses, research papers, creative projects and dissertations selection – are due this week. Faculty are needed to review the submissions and determine the award recipients. She noted that Amin had volunteered to find someone to serve, and that Calderon had volunteered to serve on a committee. Beall and Pohl will serve if needed.

GCCC has now approved full graduate packages from CBA and CSBS. In the interests of time, Graduate Council members were asked to vote on the curriculum by Friday, October 2nd. Cutter will send out minutes from the GCCC, a curriculum summary, and the curriculum materials so that the vote can take place by email.

Schwieger was on her way back to campus from a college fair in Decorah. On her behalf, Dhanwada noted that Thinking About Graduate School will be on September 29th from 3:30-4:45; 200 students have registered. Also, 25 students met recently as part of the Graduate Student Advisory Board to discuss ways to develop and build a graduate student community.

Beall noted upcoming Brown Bag Seminars in October and November, and called for nominations for additional presenters.

New Business:

Provost Wohlpert began the discussion with a few comments. With respect to the importance of graduate education at UNI, he said that it was consistently mentioned during the academic master planning process, including at the open forums. He noted

that if it is in the mission and vision, it will be addressed. With respect to the issue of leadership for graduate education, he does believe that more time must be devoted to graduate education, while continuing to address undergraduate education. He also noted that the university now has two associate provosts, down from four in the recent past (currently unfilled are AP for Research and Sponsored Programs and AP for International Programs).

Wohlpert said that he does not have a particular plan or answer in mind, but wants to have conversations around campus about academic leadership. He wants to seriously consider the issues and possible solutions. Today, he would like to hear feedback and further discussion of the issues covered at the last Graduate Council meeting.

One option which has been discussed is the possibility of combining leadership of the Graduate College and the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. This combination is relatively common at other institutions, but Wohlpert has heard some concerns about this possibility across campus. One potential problem is that this combination may narrow the pool of potential candidates for the position. Pohl mentioned that she was concerned about the potential for real or perceived inequalities.

Graduate Council had discussed the need to elevate graduate education without duplicating efforts across campus. In addition to RSP, another area of potential overlap with graduate programs was distance and continuing education. Wohlpert mentioned that some problems with this combination are that continuing education is already a full time job, and that they are a self-sustaining program. A discussion of the flow of funds from continuing education auxiliary accounts to the provost's office, colleges and departments ensued. There was also a discussion of the quality matters curriculum. Wohlpert said that the academic master plan needs to have clear goals and objectives for graduate education.

Wohlpert agreed that we need to think about the long-term health of graduate education and not a quick fix. He is also cognizant of the desire not to needlessly proliferate administrative positions. The discussion then turned to the concept of faculty administrators or teacher administrators, in which faculty members could hold an administrative position and still teach a partial load. Cutter, Dhanwada and Wohlpert have all done this and enjoyed the intellectual stimulation, but agreed that there can be some concerns with respect to maintaining a high quality learning experience for students. Wohlpert is open to this idea for the graduate dean and associate dean, as long as the idea is supported by the campus community. Clayton recommended that the Graduate Council members contact their constituents to determine the level of support for this idea and report back at the next meeting. Wohlpert also said that he would like for there to be a defined term for the Dean and Associate Dean, removing the "interim" designation.

Wohlpert asked if the council sees itself as providing a vision and direction for graduate education? Provide guidance, stimulation, here's what we need to be doing? Ideas for

new graduate programs? Giving people encouragement to think about possibilities? A general response was that, yes, the council wants to provide that vision, but curriculum comes from bottom up; still lots of reaction to top down approaches taken in the past. Cutter mentioned that this would be somewhat similar to the role of the LACC. As part of the ensuing discussion, several ideas were mentioned, including

- ☐ the possibility of new interdisciplinary master's programs, and a MA in liberal studies (more of a life long learning type of degree rather than a vocational or professional degree)
- ☐ the necessity of a stabilized administrative structure
- ☐ the importance of curriculum being faculty driven, but also following the established curriculum process which provides reviews of quality/rigor and other issues
- ☐ concern about additional demands being placed on current faculty without the potential for new hires
- ☐ non-degree programs, certificates, and post-graduate diplomas

Calderon asked about putting more graduate courses online. Wohlpert answered that these choices should be up to the faculty, who should make informed and educated choices.

Fontana brought up the idea of discussing the different types of graduate students at UNI – those on the path to doctoral degrees vs those for whom a master's is a terminal degree. The different paths might lend themselves to different degree requirements.

Clayton mentioned that the academic master planning process will continue to move forward after the forums. There will be call for participation in processes including setting goals and objectives in the near future. Faculty across campus need to participate in this process. Three hundred people attended the open forums; for those who were unable to attend, there is still an opportunity to provide feedback online.

Clayton said that more curriculum items will be coming on future agenda, and asked if council members had other items they would be interested in discussing. Power mentioned post-graduate diplomas as offered in the College of Education, as well as computer problems. Cutter mentioned the possibility of arrangements in which UNI courses are offered in partnership with local retirement communities. Fontana is interested in how student advising is counted as part of merit pay, and the potential for additional resources to offer more courses and start new programs. Clayton mentioned that programs could share best practices.

Meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa L. Beall

Graduate Faculty Chair